

Radiological Quantities and Units with the Mass Activity Calculator

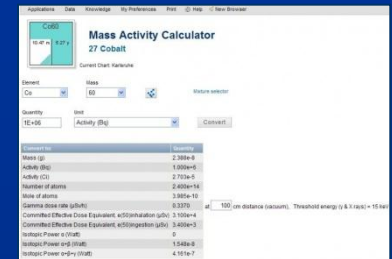
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Learning Objectives

- To become familiar with basic radiological units such as becquerel (Bq), curie (Ci), sievert (Sv), etc.
- To become familiar with basic radiological quantities such as activity, specific activity, dose rate, etc.
- To understand the relationships between the basic units
- To get to know how to use the Mass Activity Calculator module in Nucleonica to convert between different units. This requires familiarity with the Glossary, Help, Calculator
- To strengthen the above understanding through a series of problems and exercises.



Radiological Quantities and Units

1. Basic Quantities and Relations
2. Derived Quantities
3. Mass Activity Calculator
4. Using the Mass Activity Calculator
 - 4.1 Nuclide Selector
 - 4.2 Unit/Quantity Selector
 - 4.3 Convert to / Quantity Table
5. Nuclide Mixtures
6. Exercises
7. Solutions
 - Solution 1
 - Solution 2
 - Solution 3
 - Solution 4
 - Solution 5

The mass activity calculator is a popular tool for conversion between different physical quantities (e.g. mass, activity, number of atoms, etc.). A particularly useful feature is that in addition to single nuclides, the mass activity calculator can also be applied to nuclide mixtures. These nuclide mixtures can be created with the [Nuclide Mixtures](#) module. The Convert to box shows the full list of quantities. In addition to the standard list (mass, activities, etc.), conversions can also be made using:

- external and internal dosimetry quantities such as the gamma dose rate (where the distance is required)
- the [committed effective doses](#) for inhalation and ingestion.
- the amount of heat generated – [isotopic power](#) – through radioactive decay for α , $\alpha+\beta$, $\alpha+\beta+\gamma$.

Applications Data Knowledge My Preferences Print Help New Browser

Co60
10.47 m 5.27 y

Mass Activity Calculator

27 Cobalt

Current Chart: Karlsruhe

Element: Co Mass: 60 Mixture selector


Quantity: 1E+06 Unit: Activity (Bq) Convert

Convert to:	Quantity
Mass (g)	2.388e-8
Activity (Bq)	1.000e+6
Activity (Ci)	2.703e-5
Number of atoms	2.400e+14
Mole of atoms	3.985e-10
Gamma dose rate (μSv/h)	0.3370
Committed Effective Dose Equivalent, e(50)inhalation (μSv)	3.100e+4
Committed Effective Dose Equivalent, e(50)ingestion (μSv)	3.400e+3
Isotopic Power α (Watt)	0
Isotopic Power α+β (Watt)	1.548e-8
Isotopic Power α+β+γ (Watt)	4.161e-7

at 100 cm distance (vacuum). Threshold energy (γ & X rays) = 15 keV

In the above example, the nuclide Co-60 is selected. A different nuclide can be selected from the element and mass drop-down menus. The default source strength is 1 MBq. In the unit drop-down menu, the source strength is shown in becquerel (Bq), curie (Ci), number of atoms, etc. The user can also select a previously defined nuclide mixture (by clicking on the Mixture selector). Further information is given in the Nucleonica wiki.

Help: Nucleonica Wiki...



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[wiki]

navigation

- Help
- Glossary
- Element Information
- ReadingRoom
- Gallery of Nuclear Science
- Weblinks
- Karlsruhe Nuclide Chart
- Premium Membership

support

- Training Courses
- Nucleonica at a glance
- Nucleonica Overview
- Ask an Expert
- FAQs
- Technical Support

tools

- Recent changes
- Random page
- Editing

search

Go Search

toolbox

- What links here
- Related changes
- Upload file
- Special pages
- Printable version
- Permanent link

help

discussion

edit

history

delete

move

watch

Help:Mass Activity Calculator

Contents [hide]

- 1 Nucleonica's Mass Activity Calculator
- 2 Did You Know
- 3 Nuclide Mixtures
- 4 Using the Module
 - 4.1 Nuclide Selector
 - 4.2 Unit/Quantity Selector
 - 4.3 Basic Quantities and Relationships
 - 4.4 Derived Quantities
 - 4.5 Simple Decay and the Decay Constant
- 5 References

Nucleonica's Mass Activity Calculator

The mass activity calculator is a popular tool for conversion between different physical quantities (e.g. mass, activity, number of atoms, etc.). A particularly useful feature is that in addition to single nuclide, the mass activity calculator can also be applied to nuclide mixtures. These nuclide mixtures can be created with the [Nuclide Mixtures](#) module. The Convert to box shows the full list of quantities. In addition to the standard list (mass,activities, etc.), conversions can also be made using:

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- the committed effective doses for inhalation and ingestion.
- the amount of heat generated – isotopic power – through radioactive decay for α , $\alpha+\beta$, $\alpha+\beta+\gamma$.

In the above example, the nuclide Co-60 is selected. A different nuclide can be selected from the element and mass drop-down menus. The default source strength is 1 MBq. In the unit drop-down menu, the source strength is shown in becquerel (Bq), curie (Ci), number of atoms, etc. The user can also select a previously defined nuclide mixture (by clicking on the Mixture selector). Further information is given in the

Applications

Data

Knowledge

My Preferences

Print

Help

New Browser

Co60

10.47 m

5.27 y

Mass Activity Calculator

27 Cobalt

Current Chart: Karlsruhe

Element

Co

Mass

60

Mixture selector

Quantity

Unit

Convert

1E+06

Activity (Bq)

Convert to:	Quantity
Mass (g)	2.388e-8
Activity (Bq)	1.000e+6
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Number of atoms	2.400e+14
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Isotopic Power $\alpha+\beta$ (Watt)	1.548e-8
Isotopic Power $\alpha+\beta+\gamma$ (Watt)	4.161e-7

at 100 cm distance (vacuum). Threshold energy (γ & X rays) = 15 keV

Mass Activity Calculator

1. Basic Quantities and Relations

In this section, the basic relationships between number of atoms, mass, and activity, are developed. From these basic quantities, additional quantities such as the gamma dose rate, the effective doses for inhalation and ingestion and the isotopic powers can be obtained.

For an amount of material with mass in grams given by $Mass(g)$, the number of atoms N is given by

$$\frac{N}{N_A} = \frac{Mass(g)}{M} \quad \text{or} \quad N = Mass(g) \cdot \frac{N_A}{M}$$

Where N_A is Avogadro's number or Avogadro's constant ($N_A = 6.002214179 \times 10^{23}$), and M is the atomic mass of the nuclide. This basic relationship follows from the fact that 1 mole of any material contains Avogadro's number of atom.

The conversion of number of atoms to the number of moles is given by

$$\text{Number of moles} = \frac{N}{N_A}$$

The conversion from number of atoms to activity, and vice versa, is obtained using

$$Activity(Bq) = k \cdot N = \ln 2 \cdot N / \tau$$

$$Activity(Ci) = Activity(Bq) / 3.7 \cdot 10^{10}$$

Where k , and τ are the decay constant and half-life respectively of the nuclide. Combining the above relations, it follows that the relation between activity and mass is given by

$$Activity(Bq) = (\ln 2 / \tau) \cdot Mass(g) \cdot N_A / M$$

2. Derived Quantities

From the activity A , additional important quantities such as the gamma dose rate, the committed effective doses and the isotopic powers can be derived. The relations used in the Mass Activity Calculator are given below. For more details on the meaning and derivation of these quantities, the reader should follow the links.

The gamma dose rate in tissue, $\frac{dH}{dt}$, (follow the link for the derivation) is given by

$$\frac{dH}{dt} = A / (4\pi R^2) \cdot \sum_i (E_i \cdot P_i \cdot (\mu_i / \rho)_i^{tis})$$

From the above relation, it can be seen that the gamma dose rate depends on the distance R from the source. For this reason, for the evaluation of the gamma dose rate, the distance must also be specified. A default distance of 100 cm is used. In addition, the threshold energy must also be specified. The default value of the threshold energy is 15 keV. Other quantities required for the calculation are the energies E_i and emission probabilities P_i of the radiation, and the mass absorption coefficient $(\mu/\rho)_i^{tis}$ in tissue. The summation index i refers to all the individual gamma and x-ray energies.

The committed effective doses are given by

$$\text{Committed effective dose for inhalation, } E_{inh}(50) = e_{inh}(50) \cdot \text{Activity}(Bq)$$

$$\text{Committed effective dose for ingestion, } E_{ing}(50) = e_{ing}(50) \cdot \text{Activity}(Bq)$$

Finally, the isotopic power is given by

$$\text{Isotopic Power } (\alpha) = A \cdot |E_\alpha|$$

$$\text{Isotopic Power } (\alpha + \beta) = A \cdot |E_\alpha + E_\beta|$$

$$\text{Isotopic Power } (\alpha + \beta + \gamma) = A \cdot |E_\alpha + E_\beta + E_\gamma|$$

4.1 Nuclide Selector

In the Mass Activity Calculator, the nuclide Co-60 is selected by default. A different nuclide can be selected from the element and mass drop-down menus.

The Nuclide Chart Button shows the location of the selected nuclide on the nuclide chart. To the right of this, the nuclide mixture link can be used to select a nuclide mixture.

The source strength can be specified by using the drop-down menus (see the following section). The default source strength is 1 MBq.

In the Unit/Quantity drop-down menus, the source strength is shown in Becquerel (Bq), Curie (Ci), Number of Atoms, etc. This can then be converted to other units.



The screenshot displays the 'Mass Activity Calculator' interface. At the top left, a small nuclide chart highlights the position of Co-60, with its half-lives '10.47 m' and '5.27 y' indicated. The main title is 'Mass Activity Calculator' with '27 Cobalt' below it. A label 'Current Chart: Karlsruhe' is present. The 'Element' dropdown is set to 'Co' and the 'Mass' dropdown is set to '60'. To the right of these is a 'Mixture selector' link and a small icon. Below, the 'Quantity' field shows '1E+06' and the 'Unit' dropdown is set to 'Activity (Bq)'. A 'Convert' button is located at the bottom right.

4.2 Unit/Quantity Selector

The input unit can be changed in the Unit drop down menu. The default unit is Bq. Had the value Curie been selected, on pressing the Convert button, the corresponding values in grams, Bq, number of atoms etc. are shown in the Convert to/Quantity table.

Quantity

Unit

Activity (Bq)

Mass (g)

Activity (Bq)

Activity (Ci)

Number of atoms

Mole of atoms

μSv/h gamma dose rate

μSv e(50)inh

μSv e(50)ing

Watt (alpha)

Watt (alpha+beta)

Watt (alpha+beta+gamma)

Convert

Once the unit and quantity have been selected in the Unit/Quantity Selector, the source strength in other units is given in the Convert to / Quantity table, by pressing the Convert button. The results are shown for 1 MBq Co-60.

Convert to:	Quantity
Mass (g)	2.388e-8
Activity (Bq)	1.000e+6
Activity (Ci)	2.703e-5
Number of atoms	2.400e+14
Mole of atoms	3.985e-10
Gamma dose rate (μSv/h)	0.3370
Committed Effective Dose Equivalent, e(50)inhalation (μSv)	3.100e+4
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at cm distance (vacuum), Threshold energy (γ & X rays) = 15 keV

5. Nuclide Mixtures

The mass activity calculator can also be used for [nuclide mixtures](#). In the diagram shown, the nuclide mixture “natural uranium” has been selected. This mixture has been previously created in the Nuclide Mixtures module for 1 mole (of atoms) of natural uranium containing

0.9927 mole U-238,
 7.114×10^{-3} mole U-235 and
 5.310×10^{-5} mole U-234.

As can be seen, even 1 mole of atoms of natural uranium, with a mass of 238 gram and activity of almost 6 MBq (without daughters), has a negligible gamma dose rate and heat emission rate (isotopic power).



Mass Activity Calculator

Natural Uranium

Mixture

Natural Uranium

Nuclide selector

Quantity

1

Unit

Mole of atoms

Convert

Convert to:	Quantity
Mass (g)	238.0
Activity (Bq)	5.981e+6
Activity (Ci)	1.617e-4
Number of atoms	6.022e+23
Mole of atoms	1.000
Gamma dose rate (μSv/h)	2.922e-3
Committed Effective Dose Equivalent, E(50)inhalation (μSv)	5.199e+7
Committed Effective Dose Equivalent, E(50)ingestion (μSv)	2.811e+5
Isotopic Power α (Watt)	4.356e-6
Isotopic Power α+β (Watt)	4.368e-6
Isotopic Power α+β+γ (Watt)	4.373e-6

at 100 cm distance

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6. Exercises

1. **Calculate the specific activities of C-14 and S-35?** ($1.7\text{E}11$ Bq/g (4.5 Ci/g), $1.6\text{E}15$ Bq/g ($4.3\text{E}4$ Ci/g)).
2. **The activity of Sr-90 is 18,000 transformations per minute. What is the mass of Sr-90?** (Ans. mass = $5.88\text{E}-11\text{g}$).
3. **Six grams of carbon from a piece of wood found in an ancient temple are analyzed and found to have an activity of 10 transformations per minute per gram (from C-14). How many atoms of C-14 are present in the sample and what is their mass?** ($2.6\text{E}11$ atoms, mass = $6.0\text{E}-12$ g)
4. **The concentration of potassium (K) in humans is about 1.7 g/kg. How much potassium does an average person (weight 80 kg) contain?** (136 g).

What is the abundance of K-40 in natural potassium? (0.0117%)

What is the mass and activity of K-40 in this person? ($1.59\text{E}-2$ g, 4.2 kBq).

5. **What is the dose rate from a 100 MBq source of Co-60 at 2m distance?** (8.4 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$)